

**JOINT STAFF REPORT
WINTER FACT SHEET NO. 2
Columbia River Compact
January 25, 2001**

Purpose: To review salmon, steelhead, sturgeon, and smelt stock status and consider commercial fishing seasons for salmon, sturgeon, shad, and smelt in the mainstem Columbia River.

TAC: The Joint Staff report was mailed out on January 12, 2001 and was reviewed by the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) prior to mailing. This Fact Sheet was also reviewed by the TAC.

Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead Forecasts				
Run	2001 Forecast	Comments	2000	
			Preseason Forecast	Actual Return
<u>Spring Chinook</u>				
Willamette	61,000	Average, largest since 1993	59,900	57,500
Sandy	4,000	Average, similar to 2000 return	3,800	3,800
Cowlitz	1,000	Poor, record low	2,000	1,700
Kalama	1,000	Poor, similar to recent 5-year average	1,400	1,400
Lewis	2,800	Below average, largest since 1995	2,600	2,200
Upriver	364,600	Outstanding, record high (1938)	134,000	178,600
Snake River Wild	39,300	Outstanding, largest on record (1979)	5,800	12,400
Upper Columbia Wild	6,300	Improved, largest since 1993	4,500	4,300
<u>Summer Chinook</u>				
Upriver	24,500	Poor, below recent 5-year average	33,300	30,700
Snake River Wild	3,100	Below average, improved from 2000	2,000	900
<u>Sockeye</u>				
Upriver	78,000	Below average, second largest since 1993	31,200	93,800
Snake River	105	Poor, mostly returns from captive brood	168	447
<u>Summer Steelhead</u>				
Skamania Index	12,000	Average, similar to 5-year average	10,200	16,600
Group A Index	201,300	Good, third largest since 1992	210,00	216,700
Group B Index	36,000	Below average, above recent 5-year average	33,800	40,900
Total Upriver Index	249,300	Above average, second largest since 1992	254,000	274,200

2001 MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

- The Columbia River Fish Management Plan (CRFMP) expired on July 31, 1999, and the parties to *United States versus Oregon* are continuing re-negotiation discussions initiated in 1998.
- No Management Agreements are in place for 2001 fisheries.

Endangered Species Act (ESA)

- Because no CRFMP or corresponding Management Agreement is in place, non-Indian and treaty Indian fisheries proposed for January 1-July 31, 2001 are described in separate ESA documents.
- The states of Washington and Oregon submitted a Section 7/10 Application to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) on November 3, 2000 outlining proposed non-Indian fisheries. The Application addressed impacts to all listed salmonids for the time period of January 1-July 31, 2001.
- The Columbia River tribes submitted a Biological Assessment outlining proposed treaty Indian fisheries to the NMFS on December 15, 2000. The Assessment addressed impacts to all listed salmonids for the time period of January 1-July 31, 2001.
- The states' intent is to manage non-Indian winter/spring season fisheries in accordance with the Application submitted to the NMFS.

<i>SUMMARY OF PROPOSED IMPACTS</i>	
<u>Chinook</u>	
Spring Snake River Wild	≤ 2%
Spring Upper Columbia River Wild	≤ 2%
Spring Lower Columbia River Wild	≤ 12%
Spring Upper Willamette River Wild	≤ 10%
Summer Snake River Wild	≤ 1%
<u>Sockeye</u>	
Snake River Wild	≤ 1%
<u>Steelhead</u>	
Snake River Wild	≤ 2%
Upper Columbia River Wild	≤ 2%
Upper Columbia River Hatchery	≤ 6%
Middle Columbia River Wild	≤ 2%
Lower Columbia River Wild	≤ 2%
Upper Willamette River Wild	≤ 2%
<u>Trout</u>	
Coastal Cutthroat Wild	≤ 0.3%
Bull Trout	0%

- Negotiations amongst *United States versus Oregon* parties are underway to establish state and tribal fishery impacts for 2001 winter/spring fisheries with the intention of completing a draft Management Agreement in early February.

Willamette Spring Chinook Management

- On February 27, 1998 and February 19, 1999 the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission (OFWC) adopted revisions to spring chinook chapters of the Willamette Basin Fish Management Plan.
- Revised spring chinook chapters in the Willamette Plan allow for Willamette spring chinook to be managed in compliance with ODFW's Wild Fish Management Policy and include harvest limitations to help rebuild wild spring chinook populations.
- At their January 19, 2001 meeting the OFWC considered catch guidelines for Willamette River spring chinook; however, action will not be taken on this issue until the February 16, 2001 OFWC meeting.
- On November 21, 2000 ODFW completed the public review draft of the Fisheries Management and Evaluation Plan (FMEP) for Willamette spring chinook to comply with Section 4(d) of the ESA. The draft FMEP proposes a 20% freshwater fisheries impact rate on Willamette wild spring chinook in 2001.
- The Willamette spring chinook FMEP was published in the Federal Register on December 27, 2000 and the public comment period ends on January 26, 2001.
- A letter of concurrence is expected from the NMFS by mid-February.

Sturgeon Management

- Total annual harvestable number of 50,000 white sturgeon for lower Columbia River fisheries is allocated 10,000 (20%) commercial and 40,000 (80%) sport.
- During 2000 fisheries, commercial landings totaled 10,600 and sport catches totaled 40,500 which exceeded annual catch guidelines.
- Fisheries will be managed for reduced catch guidelines during 2001 and 2002 to maintain a 3-year average annual catch of 10,000 white sturgeon in commercial fisheries and 40,000 white sturgeon in sport fisheries.
- Commercial sturgeon seasons are allowed outside traditional salmon fishing periods to optimize the economic benefits of the commercial sturgeon allocation.
- The Sturgeon Management Task Force (SMTF) met on January 17 to discuss recommendations for 2001 Zone 6 sturgeon fishery management guidelines.
- The Dalles Pool 2001 catch guidelines are the midpoint of the range of guidelines used during 1998-2000. Other 2001 catch guidelines remain the same as those used during 1998-2000.
- The SMTF recognizes an annual treaty Indian subsistence catch expectation of 300 sturgeon.

<i>Zone 6 Sturgeon Catch Guidelines For 2001</i>			
Pool	Sport	Treaty	Total
Bonneville Pool	1,520	1,300	2,820
The Dalles Pool	700	1,100	1,800
John Day Pool	560	1,160	1,720
Total	2,780	3,560	6,340

NON-INDIAN FISHERIES

Smelt Fisheries

- A Level 1 commercial smelt fishery in the mainstem Columbia River was adopted at the December 18, 2000 Compact hearing.
- The adopted fishery consists of one 18-hour fishing period per week (3 AM-9 PM Wednesdays) and is scheduled to occur during January 1 - March 31, 2001.
- Effort has been extremely low with less than 10 fishers participating to date.
- Landings to date have totaled less than 500 pounds.
- Migration conditions have been good with water temperatures exceeding 40°F since December 1, 2000.
- The Columbia River is unusually low and clear for this time of year with flow at Bonneville Dam exceeding 150 kcfs only once since December 1, 2000. Visibility at Tongue Point was 97 inches on January 17, 2001.
- Washington tributaries are closed for commercial smelt fishing except for the Cowlitz River which is currently open for one 12-hour fishing period (3 PM Tuesday–3 AM Wednesday) during January 1 – March 31, 2001.
- The Cowlitz River is open to sport smelt fishing from 6 AM to 10 PM Saturdays during January 1-March 31, 2001. To date few dippers have participated and no catch has been observed.
- Water temperature in the Cowlitz River on January 20 was 43° and visibility was 24-36 inches.

Winter Commercial Sturgeon Season

- The following fishery was adopted at the December 18, 2000 Compact hearing.

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
J A N U A R Y		Noon ————— 8	6 PM ————— 9		Noon ————— 11	6 PM ————— 12	
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
		Noon ————— 15	6 PM ————— 16		Noon ————— 18	6 PM ————— 19	
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
		Noon ————— 22	6 PM ————— 23		Noon ————— 25	6 PM ————— 26	
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
F E B		Noon ————— 29	6 PM ————— 30		Noon ————— 1	6 PM ————— 2	
	28	29	30	31	1	2	3
		Noon ————— 5	6 PM ————— 6		Noon ————— 8	6 PM ————— 9	
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

1 Zones 1-5, sales of salmon and sturgeon allowed, 9" minimum and 9-3/4" maximum mesh size restrictions. Standard sanctuaries: Grays, Elokomina (A), Cowlitz, Kalama (A), Lewis (A), Washougal, & Sandy rivers.

- Fishery structure is based on 1998-2000 successful fisheries.
- White sturgeon catch to date is well ahead of landings observed during 1998-2000.
- Preseason catch expectations for this fishery were 1,500-2,500 white sturgeon and up to 50 spring chinook.
- Catch in Zones 1-3 has increased compared to that observed in recent years.
- To date one spring chinook has been landed in this fishery.

<i>Commercial White Sturgeon Landings, 1998-2001</i>				
Date	2001	2000	1999	1998
January 8-9	433	421	433	363
January 11-12	614	138	177	195
January 15-16	348	132	122	188
January 18-19	225	70	126	150
January 22-23	<u>219</u>	<u>96</u>	<u>108</u>	<u>321</u>
Total to Date	1,839	857	966	1,217

Non-Indian Winter Commercial Salmon Season

- The Joint Staff will not propose a fishery at this hearing.
- Assuming completion of negotiations with *United States versus Oregon* parties the Joint Staff expects to consider salmon fishing options at a mid-February Compact hearing.

Non-Indian Spring Commercial Salmon Experimental Season

- A fin-marked-only commercial hatchery salmon season during April and May was included in the states Section 7/10 Application.
- The states also proposed a research project which included an experimental permit fishery using tooth nets to capture adult spring chinook for the purpose of evaluating live capture commercial fishing methods and their associated mortality. Funding of the research study is unsure at this time.
- Tooth net web orders require two months for delivery; therefore, any orders must be made immediately to ensure availability of nets for a late April fishery.
- In order to allow fishers adequate time to purchase gear and build nets the Joint Staff recommends that an experimental gear fishery be adopted at this Compact regardless of the outcome of the funding request. The purpose of this fishery would be to test the feasibility of using small mesh gill nets to capture adult spring chinook.
- Joint Staff further recommends that the fishery should occur as part of the proposed study if it is funded or as a commercial test fishery if the study is not funded.
- This fishery will be managed to remain within ESA fishery impact guidelines.
- If study is funded tooth nets will be purchased for up to twenty fishers and fishers will be required to provide an alternate net for comparative purposes. If study is not funded fisher will have to purchase net to participate in the commercial fishery

PROPOSED EXPERIMENTAL FISHERY

- ✓ Season to occur between April 16 and May 18. Exact times and dates of season to be determined at mid-February Compact hearing. A minimum of 3 daylight fishing periods will be proposed.
- ✓ Fishery to occur in Zones 1-5.
- ✓ Gear will be restricted to multi-strand gill nets not exceeding 100 fathoms in length or mesh size exceeding 4½". Nets will be hung in a minimum of a 3 to 1 ratio.
- ✓ Fisher will be required to provide, at own expense, a recovery box built to ODFW/WDFW specifications. Recovery box will be required for use on all non-adipose-clipped salmon that appear to be lethargic at capture.
- ✓ Fisher may retain only adipose-clipped salmon and all adipose-clipped salmon must be sold to a wholesale fish buyer.
- ✓ Fisher may be required to restrict the time duration of each fishing drift and may be required to use two nets for comparative purposes.
- ✓ Fisher will be required to allow monitors onboard during fishing operations and may be required to record requested information in a log book.

- Participating fishers will be required to obtain an "Experimental Fishing Gear Permit" from the ODFW as described in ORS 635-006-0020 and will be required to adhere to all terms and conditions of this permit.
- All terms and conditions of the permit will be similar to those outlined above and are expected to be adopted by the Columbia River Compact at a mid-February hearing.

Non-Indian Area 2S Commercial Shad Season

- The proposed 2001 shad season is similar to seasons adopted during 1996-2000.

PROPOSED SEASON

Season:	3 PM - 10 PM Daily May 21-25 (5 days) May 29-June 1 (4 days) June 4-8 (5 days) June 11-15 (5 days) June 18-22 (5 days) June 25-29 (5 days) 3 PM - 10 PM Daily
Area	True north/south line through Light #50 near Sandy River mouth upstream to boundary near Beacon Rock (in effect since 1976).
Gear:	Single-wall, unslacked, floater gill net, 5-3/8" to 6-1/4" mesh size restrictions 10-lb breaking strength, may not exceed 150 fathoms in length nor 40 meshes in depth.
Allowable Sales:	Only shad may be kept and sold. All salmon, walleye, and sturgeon must be immediately returned to the water and those alive must be returned to the water unharmed.

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
M	20	●—●	●—●	●—●	●—●	●—●	26
A		Memorial Day	●—●	●—●	●—●	●—●	
Y	27	28	29	30	31	1	2
J	3	●—●	●—●	●—●	●—●	●—●	9
U	10	●—●	●—●	●—●	●—●	●—●	16
N		●—●	●—●	●—●	●—●	●—●	
E	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
	24	●—●	●—●	●—●	●—●	●—●	30

- The Joint Staff will monitor this fishery to estimate salmonid handle and mortalities.
- Catch expectation is for 45,000 shad. Impacts to listed salmonids is expected to include one Snake River summer chinook, three listed hatchery steelhead, and five listed wild steelhead.
- Due to lack of participation in recent years no shad commercial fishery is proposed for the Washougal Reef area in 2001.

August Commercial Sturgeon Season

<i>Proposed Season</i>	
Season:	7 PM Sunday Aug 5 to 7 AM Monday Aug 6 (12 hours).
Sanctuaries:	Grays River, Big Creek, Gnat Creek, Elokomín-A, and Abernathy Creek sanctuaries are in place.
Area:	Mouth to Longview Bridge.
Gear:	9" minimum and 9-3/4" maximum mesh size restrictions.
Allowable Sales:	Sturgeon and salmon.
Expected Catch:	1,500-3,000 white sturgeon. 500-1,500 green sturgeon 300 chinook (<1 SRW)

- This fishery is consistent with the Joint State Sturgeon Accord.
- The fishery will allow access to a portion of the commercial catch allocation for white sturgeon while avoiding salmon and minimizing impacts to listed chinook and steelhead.
- Fishery is similar in duration, area, and time frame as those adopted in recent years.

- The short 12-hour duration (one tide) is designed to limit the catch and maximize the economic benefit.
- The 9-inch minimum mesh size restriction is highly effective in reducing steelhead and sublegal sturgeon handle in the August time frame.
- Late evening/night-time fishing will minimize sport/commercial conflicts.
- Green sturgeon harvest rate expected to be within historical levels.
- The Joint Staff is recommending that the fishery be adopted at this time to alleviate problems notifying fishers participating in Alaskan fisheries during the summer.

Anchovy and Herring Bait Fishery

- The anchovy and herring season is open year-round seaward of the Astoria-Megler Bridge, with seines of a mesh size not less than ½-inch and not over 1,400 feet in length. All other species must be released.
- The Joint Staff is not proposing any changes to the currently adopted regulations.

Mainstem Spring Chinook Sport Fishery

- The mainstem Columbia River from the mouth at Buoy 10 upstream to the I-5 Bridge is open to salmon angling during January 1 through March 31 under permanent regulations.
- The Joint Staff will not propose any modifications to this fishery at this hearing.
- Assuming completion of negotiations with the *United States versus Oregon* parties, the Joint Staff expects to consider modifications to the currently adopted fishery at a mid-February Joint State hearing to occur in conjunction with a mid-February Compact hearing.
- Assuming non-Indian fisheries are allocated a Snake River wild spring chinook incidental impact rate of 2% the Joint Staff would consider fishery modifications. The following descriptions show the range of options that are currently being considered. All modifications would be expected to become effective mid-March with current permanent regulations in effect until mid-March.

<i>Spring Chinook Sport Fishery Options</i>	
1)	Open 7 days per week upstream to Bonneville Dam. All salmon may be retained. Fishery would likely extend into late March.
2)	Open 7 days per week upstream to Bonneville Dam. Only adipose-clipped salmon may be retained. Fishery would likely extend through mid-April.
3)	Open 3 or 4 days per week upstream to Bonneville Dam. Only adipose-clipped spring chinook may be retained. Fishery would likely extend through the end of April or into early May.
4)	Open 7 days per week upstream to Bonneville Dam through April 10 and from I-5 Bridge upstream to Bonneville Dam during April 11-30. Only adipose-clipped spring chinook may be retained. Fishery would likely extend through the end of April.

Mainstem Steelhead and Shad Sport Fishery

- The mainstem Columbia River upstream to Bonneville Dam is currently open for steelhead and shad angling under permanent regulations.

<i>Current Fishery</i>	
Area:	Columbia River mouth to Bonneville Dam
Dates:	Fishery closes 12:01 am, April 1, 2001

- The Joint Staff recommends that modifications to Columbia River mainstem sport fishing regulations be considered at a mid-February Joint State hearing to occur in conjunction with a mid-February Compact hearing.

Tributary Spring Chinook Sport Fisheries

- No changes to permanent regulations for the Sandy River spring chinook sport fishery.
- WDFW will hold a public meeting on February 22, 2001 to consider sport fishery options for Washington tributaries from the Cowlitz River to the Klickitat River. The meeting is scheduled for 7 PM at the Region 5 office in Vancouver.
- ODFW will hold public meetings on Wednesday January 31, 2001 at Oregon City and St. Helens. The primary purpose of the meetings will be to discuss Willamette sport fishing options but mainstem Columbia River sport fishing options may also be discussed.

MISCELLANEOUS REGULATIONS

Monofilament Gear

- At the July 27, 2000 Compact hearing, Industry representatives requested that monofilament gear be allowed in mainstem salmon fisheries.
- Under direction of the Compact, the Joint Staff met with Industry representatives to reach consensus on this issue. No consensus was reached.
- This issue was reconsidered at several Compact hearings during the fall of 2000.
- The Compact allowed limited use of monofilament gill nets in coho fisheries occurring during the fall of 2000 to collect additional data concerning species specific catch rates by gear type.
- A public meeting was held on January 10, 2001 to discuss this issue. All Columbia River commercial fishers were mailed a letter inviting them to attend this public meeting and approximately 60-70 commercial fishers were in attendance.
- This issue was discussed but consensus was not reached at the January 10 meeting. At this meeting, opinions concerning the use of monofilament gill nets in Columbia River salmon fisheries was split 50% for and 50% against.

***Considerations Regarding the Use of Monofilament Gill Nets in
Columbia River Commercial Salmon Fisheries***

- Limited biological data exists regarding fishery impacts (i.e. species specific catch rates, dropout rates, etc...) of monofilament gear.
 - Decision concerning this gear will not impact the states ability to manage Columbia River commercial fisheries.
 - Allowance of monofilament gear may increase effort in Columbia River by allowing fishers participating in other fisheries where monofilament gear is allowed to participate in Columbia River fisheries also.
 - Monofilament gear is currently legal in Youngs Bay and all Washington (excluding Columbia River) salmon fisheries but not in Canadian or Alaskan salmon fisheries.
 - Tooth net fisheries would not likely allow the use of monofilament gear.
 - Monofilament gear is generally less expensive than multi-strand gear.
- The Joint Staff does not have a recommendation regarding the use of monofilament gill nets in the Columbia River salmon fisheries, except that if this gear is legalized, the Joint Staff would recommend that implementation not occur prior to August 1, 2001 to allow fishers time to acquire the gear if desired.

Summary of Recommendations For Non-Indian Fisheries

- ✓ No changes to ongoing sturgeon and smelt seasons.
- ✓ Delay decision on commercial and sport winter salmon seasons until mid-February Compact hearing.
- ✓ Adopt a fin-marked only experimental commercial fishery during late April and early May as proposed on page 6.
- ✓ Adopt commercial shad seasons as proposed on page 6.
- ✓ Adopt August commercial sturgeon season as proposed on page 7.
- ✓ Adopt anchovy and herring bait fishery as proposed on page 8.
- ✓ Joint Staff does not have a recommendation regarding monofilament gill nets but does recommend implementation not occur prior to August 2001.

TREATY INDIAN FISHERIES

Treaty Indian Sturgeon Setline Season

- Under permanent Compact rules the commercial sturgeon setline fishery is open from January 1-31, 2001.

- Landings through January 24 totaled 11 sturgeon.
- Catch is typically low in this season with landings during 1996-2000 ranging between 51-103 white sturgeon.
- For 2000, landings totaled 60 white sturgeon with zero landed through January 23.

Treaty Indian Winter Gillnet Season

- The tribes may recommend winter gillnet season options.

Treaty Indian Spring and Summer Ceremonial and Subsistence (C&S) Fisheries

- The tribes may recommend spring and summer C&S season options.

Treaty Indian Experimental Tribal Zone 6 Target Shad Season

- In 2001, the tribes may implement a shad dipnet fishery at The Dalles Dam east ladder exit if a market can be identified. Gear and methods will have little or no adverse impact to listed salmonids.

<i>Recommendation for Treaty Indian Shad Fisheries</i>
The Joint Staff recommends treaty Indian fishers continue to be allowed to sell shad caught incidental to commercial salmonid seasons and in traditional dipnet fisheries, as well as the proposed trap and dipnet fisheries.

NEXT COMPACT HEARING

- The Joint Staff recommends that the next Compact hearing be scheduled for Tuesday, February 20, 2001 at 10 am at Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, headquarters commission room, 2501 SW First Avenue, Portland, Oregon.
- The purpose of this hearing is to update salmon, steelhead, sturgeon, and smelt stock status and consider commercial fishing seasons for salmon, steelhead, sturgeon and smelt.
- The Joint Staff recommends that a Joint State sport hearing be scheduled to immediately follow the February 20 Compact hearing to consider Columbia River sport fishing options.
- The first fall season Compact hearing has been scheduled for 10 AM August 16, 2001 at the Water Resources Education Center in Vancouver, Washington.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
January 25, 2001